



INTRODUCTION



Christ uses it as a foundation for His own teaching on the end-times (New Testament Prophecy builds upon Old Testament Prophecy). Therefore, in order to fully understand Christ's prophetic teaching it is necessary to understand Daniel's 70 Weeks.

However Daniel's 70 Weeks also stands out for its difficulty. Above all other Prophecies, it requires careful study to understand it properly and thereby benefit from the wealth it contains. This is indicated by Daniel 9:25 which starts: "Know therefore and understand." This is a call and invitation for the reader to study the Prophecy carefully, in order to understand it. This same thought is also repeated in the New Testament's reference to it: "when you see the 'Abomination of Desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet (Daniel 9:27), standing in the holy place" (whoever reads (the Prophecy of the 70 Weeks) let him understand)" (Matthew 24:15).

However, the effort required to understand this Prophecy is nothing compared to the great treasures that it contains, waiting to be revealed. It predicts the timing of Messiah's Coming, furnishing clear and undeniable proof that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah.

Moreover, this Prophecy is foundational in the study of End-Time Prophecy. Thus it is a major Key to an accurate understanding of Bible Prophecy as a whole, not only concerning the events connected to Christ's First Coming (His Atoning Sufferings), but also to His Second Coming (His Regal Glory). It accurately reveals the programme of God's dealings with Israel, as well as the nature and Chronology of the (soon) coming Tribulation. It forms a major part of the overall Framework for Bible Prophecy. Once it is understood, you will find so many of the prophetic Scriptures will fit into place.

To understand the background to the Prophecy, we must begin at the start of Daniel 9, which introduces the reign of Darius the Mede.

Daniel 9:2: "In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books (of Scripture) the NUMBER of the YEARS specified by the Word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish 70 years in the Desolations of Jerusalem."

The relevant passages of Jeremiah were 25:11-12 and 29:10-14. Both speak of Israel's Babylonian Captivity (a Judgement for their sin and idolatry) as being limited to a 70-year period. Daniel, realising that this period was close to its end, interceded, with repentance, on behalf of Israel for her full restoration (v3-19) . Both passages in Jeremiah also include statements looking forward to the time of ultimate fulfilment, restoration and blessing for the nation of Israel. This is why Daniel seems to think that when Israel returns to her land, then this ultimate blessing will also coincide with their Return.

In answer to Daniel's prayer, Israel was indeed released from Captivity to return to her Land at the end of 70 years (537 BC). Moreover, God responded to his prayer by sending the messenger-angel Gabriel to impart clearer understanding to Daniel about the timing of God's Plan for Israel's immediate and ultimate Restoration:

Daniel 9:22,23: "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand, to give you insight with understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision."
God clearly wants us to meditate on and understand this Prophecy.

Daniel 9:24: "70 Weeks (or 'Sevens' of Years) are determined (by God) for your People (Israel) and for your holy City (Jerusalem), (1) to finish the transgression, (2) to make an end of sins, (3) to make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up Vision and Prophecy, and (6) to anoint the Most Holy."

God was not yet ready to bring history to its destined final climax. Although Israel would receive an immediate restoration, it would only be partial. The ultimate restoration would have to wait for the Coming of the Messiah, but God revealed His Timetable for this to be effected. He told Daniel that He was going stretch out history by 70 x 7 years (i.e., 490 years). The following paraphrase captures the sense of the passage: "Daniel, you think Israel's final spiritual and natural Restoration will be accomplished at the end of these 70 years in Babylon. But, instead of this coming to pass at this time, I am sent to tell you there is decreed upon your People and your Holy City a period of 70 7's of years, before this Vision can be realised. At the end of this period of 490 years, Israel will be fully restored and enter into all the promised covenant blessings in the Messianic Kingdom."

Let us now proceed to study this unique Prophecy in detail. We shall assume a literal approach to interpreting it, taking its plain meaning rather than spiritualising it. Interpretations generally fall into two camps: the Historicists

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and the Futurists. The Historicists assume that the Prophecy was all fulfilled at the time of Christ's First Coming, as follows from taking the '70 Weeks' as a single unbroken unit of time as Daniel 9:24 clearly states. Moreover, they can point to parts of the Prophecy being literally fulfilled by Christ in general agreement with the time predicted by Daniel. However, there are other parts of the Prophecy that although they have now been fulfilled literally, they were not fulfilled within the 70 Week timespan allocated by the Prophecy (such as v26b). More seriously, there are parts (even in v24) that have clearly not yet received a literal fulfilment (especially v27, which describes the 70th Week).

In Matthew 24:15, Jesus himself referred to v27, indicating that its fulfillment was still in the future to His time. The context clearly shows that He expected its fulfillment to take place at the End of the present Age, and certainly it has not yet been fulfilled since the time of Christ. Therefore, despite ingenious efforts, it is not possible to construct a consistent interpretation that demonstrates that this Prophecy has been completely fulfilled historically.

This in turn leads us to a Futurist interpretation, which means that although parts of it have been fulfilled by Christ's First Coming, it has not yet all been fulfilled literally, so that at least some parts of the Prophecy will be fulfilled in the future. This is a common feature of Old Testament Messianic Prophecies, which often start with events connected to Christ's First Coming, before jumping over the Church-Age to describe events leading up to Christ's Second Coming.

Many Futurists are also Dispensationalists (like myself). In its simplest terms, Dispensationalists believe a literal interpretation of the Bible requires maintaining a clear distinction between Israel and the Church in God's Purposes. Especially for Dispensationalists, Daniel's 70 Weeks is of great importance, providing strong confirmation of our viewpoint. However, Dispensationalists must face up to the fact that their standard accepted interpretation (originating from Sir Robert Anderson) is fatally flawed (Appendices 1-3 demonstrate this). Not only is its calculation of the first 69 Weeks demonstrably in error, but it also requires a large intrinsic gap between the 69th and 70th Week in contradiction to v24, leaving the great events of Christ's Death and Resurrection (central to the Prophecy) outside any of the 70 Weeks!

This book is written to demonstrate that there is a better Dispensational interpretation, that maintains the integrity of the 70 Weeks (thus preserving the best of the historical interpretations), that provides an exact prediction of Christ's Death and Resurrection (to the day), as well as affirming that v27 refers to a future 70th Week! Thus, it also preserves the best insights of the futurist interpretations. You may be wondering how this could be possible! Just read on!

Daniel's 70 Weeks indeed presents us with a Paradox, making a fully satisfying literal interpretation seemingly impossible, but we shall reveal the generally unknown Key, that unlocks the Prophecy. Before we get into the main exposition (chapter 2), chapter 1 gives the main idea. Chapters 3 & 4 show the amazing accuracy of the fulfilment in Christ. Chapters 5 & 6 show what it teaches us about the Tribulation.

Let us pray that God will give us, who live in the last days (when these things are being increasingly unsealed) the ability and insight to understand the majestic Prophecy of Daniel's 70 Weeks.

The Prophecy of Daniel's Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:24-27) is an outstanding Messianic Prophecy, surely one of the most important and amazing prophecies of the Bible. It stands out because it gives a time-prediction of exactly when the Messiah will come to Israel! We shall show that it even predicts the exact time of Messiah's Death and Resurrection! Its importance is emphasised in that Jesus Christ, in His great prophetic discourse (Matthew 24) refers to Daniel's 70 Weeks and expounds it.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 11am and 6pm
Cheney School Hall
Cheney Lane - Headington
Oxford - England - UK
OX3 7QH

